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FRENCH MILITARY OCCUPATION

of the

UPPER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

with

SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ILLINOIS

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THE FRENCH MILITARY OCCUPATION
of the
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The discovery of America, in 1492, gave to the world a new battle field in which to determine the supremacy of certain nations both at home and abroad.

During the 16th century five European nations - England, France, Spain, Holland, and Sweden - entered the contest. Holland and Sweden soon dropped out of the race, - being absorbed by England. The other three continued till the beginning of the 19th century when France was excluded from North America.

The overlapping claims were the first causes of controversy, but the nation in actual possession had the advantage and generally succeeded in holding the territory so possessed till the middle of the 18th century.

Spain followed up her discoveries in the West Indies by settlements, and a half century later founded colonies on the main land of North America. She of course laid claim to all

North America on the basis of discovery and occupation which had been strengthened by the Papal Bull of 1494. England claimed North America on the basis of the discoveries of her Cabots in 1497. By 1524, France had decided to have a share in the new world, and sent out Verrazano who discovered the main land from the Carolinas to the St. Lawrence. It was on Verrazano's discoveries that France based her claim to North America.

But the 16th. century practically failed in establishing colonies north of the Gulf of Mexico, while the 17th. opened with a great deal of colonial vigor. At this time nations planted colonies for the revenue they might return to the parent state. The colonists themselves had four motives, which either singly or in combination, prompted them to colonization. The nature of these motives differed among different nationalities and determined what nation should finally gain possession of North America.

The Spanish desired adventure, conquest, and wealth which led them to turn their attention to the mines of Mexico and Peru instead of agriculture. The French were enterprising and capable of adapting themselves to new surroundings; they easily assimilated with, and lived in scattered settlements, like the savages. They relied mostly on the fur trade for a living. The English do not mix with other peoples, especially those inferior to themselves. They carry with them their laws and institutions. They have a steady, persistent aim and a patience which enabled them to fell the forests before them on their march westward.

II

The hostility of the Spanish in the Gulf caused the English and French navigators to direct their energies toward the north. The idea of a North West passage to China was still strong in men's minds and Verrazani was seeking such a passage when he discovered the coast as far north as the St. Lawrence. French fishermen were already on the banks of Newfoundland, and the St. Lawrence, which seemed to be the natural highway to the interior of America, was unoccupied. Cartier sailed up this river in 1534, and attempted to found a colony at Montreal, but failed.

In 1604, De Monts made a settlement in Acadia, but it was not an objective point and in 1607, was abandoned. De Monts then sailed up the St. Lawrence having in mind the enlargement of French possessions, and a desire to find the Pacific Ocean founded Quebec in 1608. Here he was soon called on to make a decision which vitally affected French progress in North America. The Iroquois Indians had dominated all other tribes in Canada and the region of the Great Lakes as far west as the Mississippi for many years. The Indians of Canada looked on the French as deliverers. An alliance was formed and Champlain went to war against the Iroquois who from that time on were enemies to the French. Thus it was that the course of the French was kept out of the Ohio valley for many years and turned to the region of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi valley. When the English colony sprang up trade relations were established between them and the Iroquois who became the only savage allies of the English; and who did good service for their masters during the French and Indian wars.

A desire to traffic in peltries and save souls soon led the Frenchmen in the St. Lawrence to penetrate to the regions of the Great Lakes. As early as 1629, barter was carried on with the Indians of Lake Superior and in 1634, Jean Nicolet traveled in Wisconsin and through the Illinois country making trade agreements with the savages. In 1641, priests said mass at Sault Ste. Marie while in 1658-9 two French fur traders visited western Wisconsin and possibly saw the Mississippi.

Undoubtedly much of the North West had been traveled by Coureurs des bois. Several forts had been built on the line of the Lakes as a barrier against the Iroquois. The idea of a string of forts through the lake regions to check the Iroquois and intercept the fur trade which was fast passing to the English and Dutch was already in mind.

III

In 1666. LaSalle came to Canada and soon became the feudal proprietor of a large tract of land (La Chine) about eight miles from Montreal which was suited for fur trading. The Indian traders at La Chine brought news of a Great River to the west which flowed into the sea, and La Salle began to dream of a passage to China and a new road for commerce to the riches of China and

Margry, Vol.I. p. 436.

[#]Japan. La Salle laid his plans before the governor, Courcelle,
 and the intendant M. Talon. ^{#1}Their consent was easily gained.
 Such an exploration was a difficult undertaking as no one knew
 the distance that would have to be traveled to the west. Prepara-
 tions were soon begun. In 1670, D'Ablon and Alouez established
 a mission at Green Bay and in the same year, M. Talon sent St.
 Fusson ^{#2} to Sault Ste. Marie to look for copper mines and take
 possession of the country for France.

But while La Salle probably never gave up the idea of dis-
 covering China, time and opportunity changed his plans. The great
 minister Colbert was at the head of affairs in France at this
 time. The work of his life was to enlarge the territory and in-
 crease the power of France. Colbert ^{#3} desired a fort on the Gulf
 to keep the Spanish in check in that quarter. La Salle had become
 convinced that the Mississippi did not flow either into the Pa-
 cific Ocean or the Gulf of California, but into the Gulf of Mex-
 ico. His expedition to the Ohio valley and the plains of Illinois
 had awakened in his mind an idea of the riches of the West. He
 thought the Mississippi valley would support a large population.
 Joining his plan to Colbert's desire for a fort on the Gulf, he
 conceived the idea of building a fort at the mouth of the Missis-

[#] Parkman, La Salle, and the Discovery of the Great West, p.74.
^{#1} Margry, Vol I. p. 436.
^{#2} Parkman, La Salle, and the Discovery of the Great West p. 40.
^{#3} " " " " p.323.

issippi, and connecting it by a string of forts with Canada.[#]
By this means he hoped to lead France and civilization into the valley of the Mississippi and forever shut out the English and Spanish. M.Talon entered heartily into this plan, but he and Courcelle were recalled before it could be carried out.

Frontenac became governor of Canada in 1672. He was not slow to profit by the recommendations of M.Talon in regard to the exploration of the Mississippi. He sent out Marquette and Joliet who discovered the Mississippi in 1673. Courcelle had recommended to the French government the construction of a fort on Lake Ontario to intercept the fur trade and keep the Iroquois in check. Frontenac built this fort which was later called Frontenac, but a dispute arose between him and certain merchants in Canada in which La Salle aided him. La Salle was afterwards made proprietor of this fort through Frontenac's influence. It became the basis of his exploring operations since he was now the man most trusted^{#I} by Frontenac to carry out the recommendations of M.Talon.

La Salle prospered at Fort Frontenac and in 1677 set out for^{#2} France where his friends laid a memoir before the minister Colbert, setting forth his discoveries, telling of the riches of the

[#] Mason, Kaskaskia and Old Fort Chartres, p. 23.

^{#I} In a dispatch to Colbert, Frontenac recommended La Salle as the man most capable to discover the West - Parkman, La Salle and discoveries of the Great West, p.89 - note.

^{#2} Margry Vol.I.p.439.

of the Mississippi valley and the necessity of holding it against the English. The English had laid claim to the Mississippi valley on the basis of treaties made with the Iroquois in 1672. In this memoir, La Salle asked for certain commercial privileges, the privilege to construct two forts with seignorial rights and the government of the country for twenty years.

After borrowing considerable money and securing the services of Henry Tonty, he again set out for Canada. After reaching Canada, his plans were soon completed. He sent fifteen men to Lake Michigan to trade with the Indians and collect provisions. Niagara was selected as a basis to start from and La Motte was sent there to build a palisaded house. La Salle followed with supplies but his provision vessel was wrecked and he had to return to Frontenac to secure more. Tonty was left in command at Niagara while a vessel was being constructed to navigate the lakes. The vessel which was called The Griffin was soon completed; but owing to trouble with creditors, La Salle was detained at Frontenac till August of 1679. On his return, they immediately set out and after a somewhat stormy voyage landed at Michillmackinac. The fifteen men sent out the fall before to collect provisions had proven false and six of them were now arrested as deserters. The Griffin next sailed to Green Bay and after taking on a considerable cargo of furs which La Salle hoped would satisfy his creditors, departed for Niagara with orders to return to the head of Lake Michigan as soon as her cargo was discharged.

La Salle now started to the Illinois country with fourteen men down the western side of Lake Michigan while Tonty with

twenty started down the eastern. It was the latter part of October and the inclemency of the weather and trouble with the Indians caused him some delay. He reached the St. Joseph River on the first of November where he was to met Tonty. But Tonty had not arrived and he employed the intervening time in building a fort[#] which he called St. Joseph. It was a wooden fort forty feet long by twenty feet wide. Tonty arrived on the twentieth of November with only half his men. provisions had failed and the other half were left to subsist by hunting. They were soon brought up however. La Salle still expected the Griffin would return and marked the entrance to the river and sent two men to Michillimackinac to guide it to his new fort. The fort being finished, La Salle set out on the third of December 1679 with thirty men and eight canoes to reach the Illinois country before cold weather. He went up the St. Joseph River and crossed the forrage, - a distance of one and one-half leagues - to a tributary (Kankakee) of the Illinois. They saw no signs of human life till they reached the Illinois, though animal and fowl were plenty.

On the first of January 1680, he reached an Indian village on the Illinois River, but the Indians were away on the hunt. It was with hesitation that he took some thirty bushels of corn which the Indians had stored away. He again resumed his journey down the river and after four days came to a second Indian village at the lower end of Lake Peoria. He entered into peaceful relations with the Peoria Indians and urged them to make peace with the Iroquois

as they were now subjects of his king. But however he promised to defend them against the Iroquois provided he would be allowed to build a fort among them to protect his men. They saw the value of the French to them and eagerly consented. La Salle also told the Illinois it was necessary to build a ship to bring Frenchmen and merchandise for which they were very anxious. But his success was soon to receive a severe check. A Miami chief (Monso) came to the Illinois in the night telling them that La Salle was plotting with the Iroquois and western Indians to destroy them. An Illinois made known to La Salle what Monso had done. The Illinois chief called La Salle to a feast the next day and told frightful stories about the Mississippi as a result of which six of his men deserted.

By his previous knowledge of Monso's plot, he in a measure satisfied the Illinois of Munso's falsehood and on the fifteenth of January Fort commenced to build Fort Crevecoeur on the southern bank of the Illinois River just below Lake Peoria. After its completion, it was well palisaded for further security. Although his best workmen had deserted, he now decided to build a ship to descend the Mississippi. Father Hennipin was sent to discover the upper Mississippi. La Salle lacked iron and other equipments to complete his ship and decided to leave Tonty in command and return to Frontenac to get these supplies, also to learn of his ship on the Lakes. He reached Fort St. Joseph on the twenty-fourth of March 1680. The two men sent to Michillimackinac had returned but brought no news of his ship. He continued his journey to Frontenac and straightened up his business there in a short time. He

was ready to return when two messengers from Tonty brought news that most of his men had deserted soon after his departure and demolished Fort Crevecoeur. Two traders also brought news that the deserters had demolished Fort St. Joseph and pillaged Michillimackinac and Niagara.

IV.

This caused La Salle much delay and it was not till August the tenth 1681 that he set out a second time to the Illinois Country. He went by way of Sault Ste. Marie and Michillimackinac and reached Fort St. Joseph on the fourth of November. He had started with twenty-five men; but in his eagerness to reach his destination, he had pushed forward with twelve men leaving La Forest, his lieutenant to bring up the rest. Leaving two men at Fort St. Joseph to await the arrival of La Forest, he immediately started for the Illinois Country. His greatest anxiety was in regard to the safety of Tonty, and he made for Starved Rock and Crevecoeur with all haste as he had already heard of the threatened Iroquois invasion.

At either place, he found nothing but desolation. He left three men at Starved Rock and descended to Crevecoeur where he found the fort demolished as reported. Signs indicated that there had been a battle and the Illinois had retreated down the river. He descended as far as the Mississippi but could learn nothing of the whereabouts of Tonty. He started to return to Fort St. Joseph by way of the northern branch of the Kankakee on the bank of

which he found a hut and a block of sawed wood which told him Tonty had returned that way. On his return to Fort St. Joseph, he found La Forest had rebuilt it, cleared ground and sawed timbers for a ship on Lake Michigan.

To return now to Tonty; when La Salle had started for Frontenac he had noticed the natural advantage of Starved Rock and learning of the threatened attack of the Iroquois, sent word to Tonty to fortify it. But the desertion of Tonty's men had made this request useless and Tonty had taken up his abode with the Illinois. The Iroquois had attacked the Illinois soon after La Salle left and Tonty had escaped to the Pottawatomies near Green Bay.

Under these conditions most men would have given up all hope but La Salle stood firm. He saw that the Iroquois incursions must be stopped if he wished to succeed. He soon decided on a great scheme for collecting all the western Indians around his fort on the Illinois where with French aid they could hold the Iroquois in check and build up civilization. He had remained at Fort St. Joseph most of the time where many Indians from New England had taken up their abode. These wandering Indians were easily persuaded to go into the scheme and La Salle set out to the Illinois to gain their consent on which mission he learned of Tonty's whereabouts. He then returned to Fort St. Joseph and won the Miami over to his enterprise and was soon prepared for his third expedition to the Illinois Country.

After finding Tonty at Michillimackinac, he went to Frontenac and soon got his business in shape. In the fall of 1681 with

twenty-three Frenchmen and a number of Abenkis and Mohegan Indians, he started for the Illinois Country and explored the Mississippi to its mouth. This being done and the Iroquois again threatening the Illinois, La Salle and Tonty collected a force of men and fortified Starved Rock in 1682 and called it Fort St. Louis. [#]Indians to the number of twenty thousand were soon collected there.

A new governor, Labarre, who was not a friend to La Salle now came to Canada and succeeded in turning the king against him. Labarre sent Chevalier de Bangis to take possession of Fort St. Louis and ordered La Salle to Quebec. Tonty remained as representative of La Salle. The Iroquois made a furious attack on the fort in 1683 but were repulsed. La Salle sailed for France to answer charges against him there and this was the end of his activity in the Illinois Country. It is true he again gained the royal favor in 1684 and undertook the occupation of Louisiana and the invasion of Mexico. He was assassinated in Texas in 1687 by one of his own party. Joutel had accompanied La Salle on his last expedition. He was from the same town as La Salle and seems to have had considerable education as he became the historian of the party. He was a capable man and one most of all that La Salle could rely on.

Joutel remained faithful to the last and after La Salle's death made his way to Fort St. Louis of the Illinois. Here he found Tonty who had been restored to his command, engaged in war with the Iroquois. Tonty had led an expedition of one-hundred and eighty Frenchmen and four-hundred Iroquois against the Senecas.

In 1690 the proprietorship of fort St. Louis was granted to Tonty and La Forest who carried on a trade in furs there. In 1702 a royal decree did away with their proprietorship and Tonty went to lower Louisiana. The fort was discontinued for a time, but was reoccupied again in 1718 by French traders and by 1721 was finally deserted. This is the history of La Salle's occupation of the Illinois Country as found in Parkman's works and substantiated by the relations of La Salle and Tonty in Margry's collection of historical documents. So the 17th century closed without France gaining a permanent foothold in the Illinois Country. The 18th century opened with better auspices.

V.

At the beginning of the 18th century England, France, and Spain all laid claim to the Mississippi valley. England was steadily advancing from the Atlantic westward and Spain had powerful fortresses in Mexico from which she could send out expeditions to the Mississippi valley. France understood the situation and began to carry into effect the idea of La Salle and build a string of forts to connect Canada with the regions of the south and west. As early as 1715 Father Mermet[#] reported from Kaskaskia to the governor of Canada that the English were building forts on

[#] Mason, Kaskaskia and Old Fort Chartres p. 24.

on the Ohio. It was in this same year that the Louisiana Company of the West (soon absorbed into the Company of the Indies) came into possession of Louisiana. Illinois was detached from New France and became a part of Louisiana. The threatening attitude of England and the rumor of rich mines in Illinois had a decided effect on the mother country. France decided to take measures to hold the country. Representatives from the Louisiana Company in connection with representatives from the French government decided to build a fort in Illinois. Hence fort Chartres was established as a barrier against England and Spain; to protect the infant colony of Illinois and the Church; to be a center of trade and for the operation of mines, and to become the chief seat of the Company of the Indies.

On the ninth of February 1718 there arrived at Mobile, by ship, from France, Pierre Boisbriant, a Canadian gentleman, with the commission of Commandant at the Illinois. He was a cousin of Bienville, then governor of Louisiana, and had already served under him in that province. In 1718 Boisbriant started from Mobile to the Illinois Country where he was to build a fort. He selected a site sixteen miles above Kaskaskia on the left bank of the Mississippi and by the Spring of 1720 the fort was completed, the banner of France floated to the breeze and it was called

Mason, Kaskaskia and Old Fort Chartres, p.24.

#I ibid.

 fort Chartres.- (Probably because it was erected under a charter from the Crown). It was completed none too soon, for in the same year the Spanish desired to destroy it, and send out an expedition from Mexico for that purpose, but all were killed by the Indians ^{#1} on the way. A thriving village soon sprang up around the fort which became the center of civil government for the Illinois Country. Applications for land had to be made to the provisional council at Fort Chartres and many titles to land rest upon the grants of that council to this day. Boisbriant and his associates held a Court there which decided all cases in civil law for forty years.

About 1723 the Illinois Indians around Fort St. Louis and Lake Peoria were attacked by the Fox Indians Boisbriant sent a force from Fort Chartres to their relief. The Foxes were defeated ^{#2} and the Illinois returned to the protection of Fort Chartres.

In 1725, Bienville, governor of Louisiana, was summoned to France and Boisbriant became acting governor in his stead with head-quarters at New Orleans. De Siette, a captain in the royal army, became commandant of Fort Chartres. Since the Illinois had removed to Fort Chartres the way to the north was open and the Foxes began to harass the settlement around the fort. De Siette

Mason, Kaskaskia and Old Fort Chartres. p. 25.

#1 ibid, p.26

#2 ibid, p.28

proposed to De Liguerie, the French Commandant at Green Bay to destroy them. De Liguerie thought it the best thing to do but feared the strength of the Foxes and it was not done then. In 1728 the Canadian commandant, Marquis de Beauharnois, ordered De Siette to join the Canadian forces at Green Bay to make war on the Foxes. The Foxes were again defeated but the hostilities continued until De Siette's successor waylaid and almost de-~~stroy~~[#]stroyed them.

Lieutenant Ange was the next Commandant. During his term of office, in 1732, the Royal India Company surrendered its charter to the Crown which thereafter had the exclusive government of the country. Pierre D'Artaguite, who had distinguished himself in war against the Natchez, was made Commandant in 1734. For two years he ruled in peace when Bienville had again assumed the^{#I} governorship of Louisiana and resolved to crush the Chickasaws.

He drew on all the French forts for aid and D'Artaguite with nearly all the garrison and many settlers and Indians joined the expedition, which was the first time a force had ever gone south from the Illinois Country. At the mouth of the Ohio, the force from Illinois was joined by Vincenne and garrison from that fort on the Wabash. The French were defeated and D'Artaguite killed.

Three years later La Buissoniere who had succeeded to the command at Fort Chartres joined another expedition against the

Mason, Kaskaskia and Old Fort Chartres, p.28.

#I ibid, p. 29.

Chickasaws. Soldiers from Quebec and Montreal with recruits from all the tribes on the south were included in the expedition and joined Bienville who had been reenforced with troops from Paris. After all this concentration of forces not a blow was struck, but satisfactory terms of peace were arranged.

The colony now enjoyed a period of peace. It was in a thriving condition and the population increasing some persons of noble blood came to Fort Chartres in these days. Benoist St. Claire, a captan of Marie followed La Buissoniere as commandant. He resigned in 1742 and Chevalier de Bertel took charge in his stead.

France and England were again at war and the English were threatening Fort Chartres. Some English spies had even been captured on the Mississippi. The fort was out of repair and poorly garrisoned. The old time Indian allies were won over by the English and agreed to destroy the fort but they were thwarted by the skill of Bertel. Bertel wrote many letters to his superiors asking for reenforcements and at one time contemplated abandoning the fort. The governor general of Canada sent urgent demands to the King to protect the Illinois Country on account of its extreme productiveness and its connection with Canada and Louisiana. The peace of Aix la Chapelle followed and there was no need for immediate aid.

Mason, Kaskaskia and Old Fort Chartres, p. 33.

IV.

During this period the French forts in the Mississippi valley had taken little part directly in the wars against either England or Spain. Their main work had been to keep the hostile Indians in check, for we find that Charlevoix[#] in describing his travels through North America speaks of the French building a fort at the mouth of the Fox River to keep the Sioux and Foxes in check. This was undoubtedly the fort called "La Baye". It was the garrison from this fort that joined De Siette in his expedition against the Foxes. This fort was abandoned in 1763. Fort St. Joseph^{#1} never was an important fort and was used by La Salle mostly as a basis of operations. Charlevoix describes it in 1721 as being in rather a dilapidated condition, but we find from Parkman that Villiere^{#2} who commanded at Fort St. Joseph in 1730, led an expedition against the Outagamie and killed eight hundred of them. He was aided by St. Ange from Fort Chartres.

In 1727, Fort Beauharnois was built on the western side of Lake Pepin as a base from which to discover the Western Ocean. Floods and Indians soon destroyed it, but it was rebuilt in 1731 and abandoned in 1737. There was also a fort built at Prairie du Chien^{#4} near the mouth of the Wisconsin River in 1737, mostly to pro-

Winsor, Mississippi Basin, p. 144.

#1 Wisconsin Historical Society, Vol. 6. p. 224.

#2 Parkman, Half Century of Conflict, Vol. II. p. 28.

#3 ibid, Vol. I. p. 328.

#4 Wisconsin Historical Society, Vol. II. p. 144

tect trading interests.

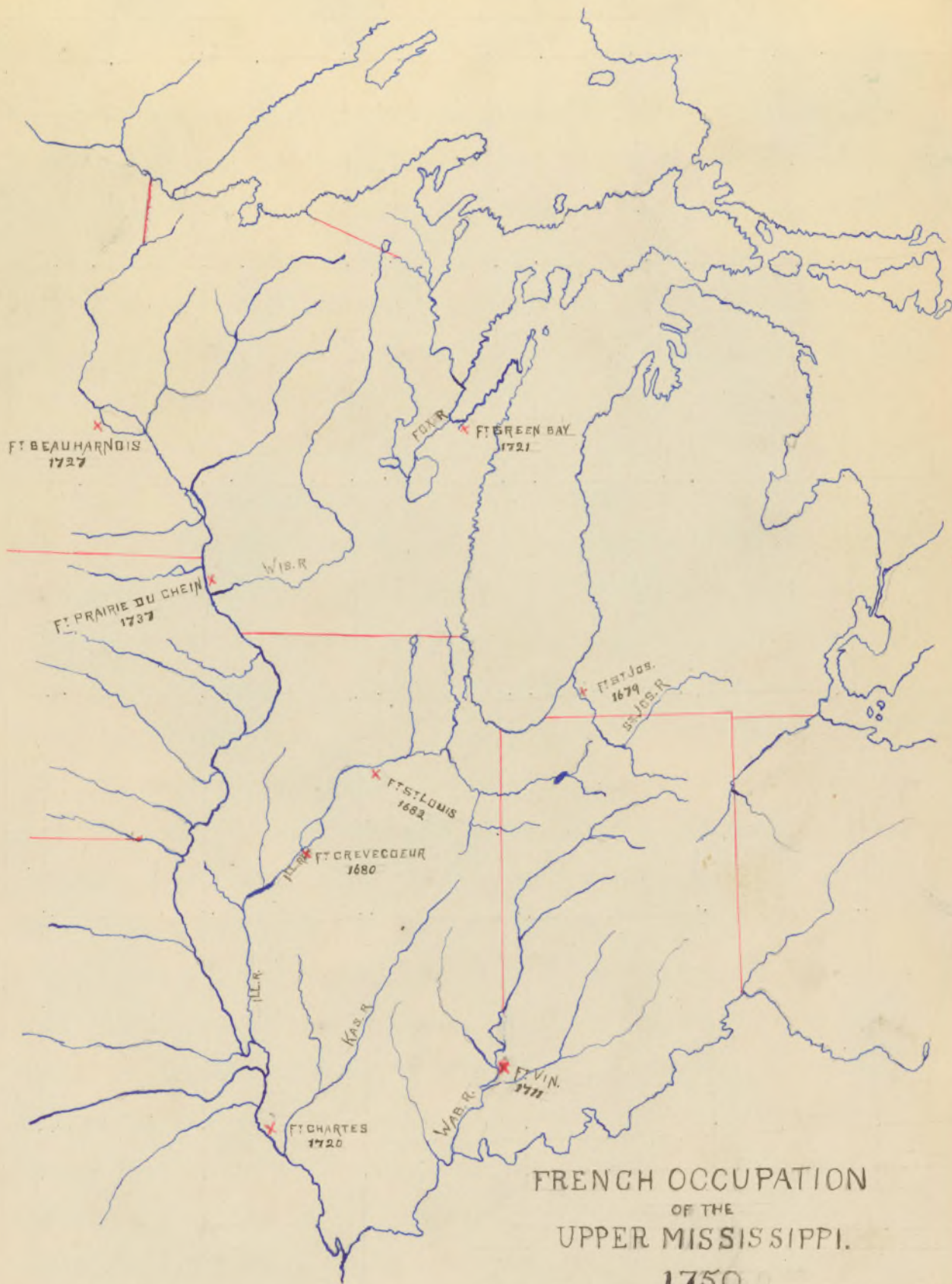
Vincennes was occupied by the French very early in the 18th century but the exact date cannot be found. Father Marest in a letter dated from Kaskaskia, November 9th, 1712, says " The French have lately established a fort on the Wabash and demanded a missionary, and Father Mermet was sent to them." The fort must have been built as early as 1710 or 1711 for the fort was completed before a missionary was asked for and it would take some time to answer the call from Kaskaskia which was the nearest place a priest could be obtained. Little of importance took place at the fort on the Wabash till Vincennes became commandant. He had been an officer in Canada since 1721. He must have taken command at the fort on the Wabash as early as 1732 and this fort received its final name from him. In 1736, he joined the detachment from Fort Chartres against the Chickasaws and was killed.[#]

As we have already seen their forts were built mostly to keep the Indians in check, though Vincennes and Chartres were a result of the threatening attitude of England and Spain and during this period (1700 - '50.) none of them were ever directly engaged against any European nation, they did good service against the Indians.

VII.

At the treaty of Aix la Chapelle, both England and France claimed the Ohio and Mississippi valleys and neither were willing

[#] Law, Judge, History of Vincennes, pp. 11-20.



to give them up. That treaty was practically looked on by both as a truce and both began to prepare for the final conflict which was to decide whether England or France should rule the great central plains of North America. England claimed that the charters of her coast colonies extended to the Pacific, also that France had acknowledged her suzerainty over the Iroquois at the treaty of Utrecht[#]. By this England claimed all lands conquered by the Iroquois whose war fathers had extended to the Mississippi. France, of course, claimed it on the occupation by La Salle. She had a string of forts extending from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to the head of Lake Superior and down the Ohio, Wabash, and Mississippi to New Orleans. At this time, France by actual occupation, held all the territory drained by the St. Lawrence, the Great Lakes, the Ohio, Wabash, and Mississippi.

The governor-general of Canada, De Galissoniere, again urged upon the king, the importance of strengthening the fort in Illinois in 1750. As a result Major Makarty with a few companies of troops arrived from France in the Fall of 1751 and rebuilt the fort in stone. Makarty was an Irishman with a born hatred against England and spared no pains to make it one of the most formidable forts in America. Its walls were of solid stone eighteen feet high which enclosed an area of four acres. The king of France intended it to secure his empire in the West and spent a million crowns in erecting it. It was hardly completed when the war again broke out and Fort Chartres took part in the opening struggle.

[#] Thwaite, The Colonies 1492 - 1750, p.256.

In 1754, Washington surprised a French party at Green Meadows and killed their leader. A detachment from Fort Chartres under Neyon de Villiers, one of the captains under Makarty, marched against Washington and in connection with a French force from Fort Du Quesne captured Fort Necessity.[#] King George the second made this act one of his pretexts for declaring war. Villiers remained at Fort Necessity from which place, he sent out a party across the Alleghanies and captured Fort Granville.

The next year Makarty sent Captain Aubry to reenforce Fort Du Quesne from which place he sallied and routed the English twice.^{#I} News of the arrival of a superior force of English caused the abandonment of Fort Du Quesne and the Illinois troops returned home. Again when the English besieged Niagara, Illinois sent troops from every village under Aubry. They joined detachments from Detroit and Michillimackinac and bravely attempted to raise the siege, but failed, many of them perishing in the attempt. Illinois was too sparsely settled to send any considerable army into the field, but she furnished provisions (mostly pork and flour) almost sufficient for the western army.

The fall of Quebec gave Canada to the English, but Fort Chartres still held out for the king although her garrison was

[#] Mason, Kaskaskia and Old Fort Chartres , p. 34.

^{#I} ibid, p. 35.

very weak. The people of Louisiana and Illinois had expected the king would retain them. St. Ange came from Vincennes to Fort Chartres and it in connection with the Indians defeated several expeditions sent against it by the English. In 1755, Captain Sles-ting from Fort Pitt, arrived before the fort. Pontiac still wanted to fight, but St. Ange told him it was of no use and formally sur-[#]rendered the fort to the English on the tenth of October, 1755. This was the last French fort in North America to surrender and with its fall the Great French empire in North America forever ceased.

[#] Mason, Kaskaskia and Old Fort Chartres, p. 38.

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